

It narrowed human liberty to the measure of the Jewish formalist, and bred the Pharisee. Its Hebrew harshness is repugnant to Christian charity as well as humanity, and it is difficult to understand how men like Calvin could reconcile with the gospel of love the barbarities practised under the pretext of maintaining Christian discipline. To widen, instead of diminishing, the scope of the barbarous criminal law of the period to the extent of using torture to obtain confessions of moral delinquencies, is a strange parody of Christian philanthropy in a man who professed to teach the religion of Jesus. Under this pseudo-Christian *regime*^ adultery was punished with death; fornication with banishment, imprisonment, drowning. To neglect to go to sermons (and sermons were both numerous and lengthy) was a crime. To forgo the Sacrament was punishable with a year's banishment. To contradict the doctrine of "The Institution" was to merit a heretic's death, as Gruet and Servetus found to their cost. To jest, even, was a crime, and woe to the sinner who cracked a joke at Calvin's expense. Cursing and swearing were still more criminal, and a peasant was even put on his trial for cursing his beast. To criticise a preacher was blasphemy; the preachers reserved to themselves a monopoly of strong language. To dance, to wear clothes of forbidden finery, to sing a worldly song, to break the Sabbath in any of the numerous items of its due observance, was to incur criminal punishment. The details of this petty tyranny seem to us sufficiently ridiculous; it was no ridiculous matter to live under the rod of John Calvin. During the years 1558 and 1559, for example, the number of such offences punished totalled 414, and this in a city of under 20,000 inhabitants. Socially, Calvinism was an intolerable tyranny to all who could not conscientiously submit to its doctrines and discipline. It tended to make such slaves and hypocrites, and it is to be feared that the city records do not prove that it was very efficacious against vice. Immorality was driven behind the scenes, if banished from the stage of public life. John Calvin is the mediaeval monk in the guise of the Christian evangelist. Nevertheless, his puritanism tended, when it did not make men hypocrites, to nurture strong characters. It steeled the conscience, trained the generation that was to vindicate